

Jasper, a black Labrador from Clinton, Illinois, recently opted to weigh in on the upcoming US presidential election, appearing to throw his support behind Democratic challenger Joe Biden and running mate Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA).

Video shared on social media by Jasper's human shows the politico pup initially sporting a look of shock when asked whether he preferred US President Donald Trump before suddenly putting a pep in his step when asked about Biden.

"Even Jasper knows," his human wrote in the post.

Watch out animal kingdom, there's a new chief in town who might become the predictor of elections.

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UK Paper Claims to Have Uncovered Secret Hamas Cyber Ops Facility in Istanbul
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The Times of London has claimed, citing sources in "Western intelligence services," that Hamas is operating a secret cyber warfare and counterintelligence center in Istanbul without the knowledge of the Turkish government.

[In a Thursday report, the Times said](#) that the center is about two years old and is used as a window to the outside world for Hamas, which has governed the Gaza Strip under an almost continuous stage of siege by Israel since winning elections in 2007.

According to the Times, Hamas runs [fundraising operations through the center](#) as well as cyber ops, such as those used to [try and phish Israeli soldiers' mobile phones](#) for information. The site is also reportedly used to purchase equipment for manufacturing weapons, and has even been used for interrogations.

All this has been done without Ankara's knowledge or consent, the Times reports. However, Turkey's ties with the Palestinians, the Gaza Strip and Hamas have steadily grown in recent years.

[In August, the UK's Telegraph reported](#) that Turkey was granting citizenship to a dozen senior operatives of a Hamas cell, claiming to have seen the Turkish identity papers of one of the group.

Later that month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received a delegation of Hamas' Political Bureau, the organization's central leadership body. [Washington issued a strenuous objection](#), noting it has designated Hamas a terrorist organization and that at least one of the delegation was wanted by the US.

However, Ankara pushed back, with the Turkish Foreign Ministry issuing a statement saying, "Declaring the legitimate representative of Hamas, who came to power after winning democratic elections in Gaza and is an important reality of the region, as a terrorist will not be of any contribution to efforts for peace and stability in the region."

In recent years, Turkey has increased its presence in Gazan affairs, investing in a variety of civil projects as Israeli bombardments of the territory have destroyed one facility after another.

Friday 10/23/20

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Video: Canadian Woman Shoved From Bus After Spitting on Commuter, Probe Underway
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Newly surfaced cellphone footage recently prompted an investigation by Canada's Metro Vancouver Transit Police after a woman was filmed being forcefully shoved out of a commuter bus for spitting on a fellow traveler.

The footage was initially posted on video-sharing site TikTok on Wednesday before it ultimately made its way across other social media platforms by Friday. Video shows a maskless woman standing in the middle of the bus aisle, slinging her saliva toward an unidentified individual after a commuter is heard saying "disgusting."

Within seconds of the action, however, the woman is pushed out of the stationary bus by the offended individual - much to the shock of others aboard the bus. It's unclear if the individual who made the remark is the same traveler who was spat on.

"Hey, come on now," the traveler documenting the incident is heard saying off-camera as others urge the pair to "chill" and "stop."

The 29-second video eventually cuts off with the upset commuter wiping his forehead before sitting back down in his seat. As for the woman, she's seen lying on the sidewalk as another woman on the bus decides to get off and help her out.

At present, investigators have not been able to determine whether the incident unfolded recently or occurred sometime in the last few months. Officials have been able to contact neither the netizen who uploaded the post nor either of the parties seen in the video.

Transit Police Sgt. Clinton Hampton told Vancouver outlet News 1130 that in addition to figuring out a timeline, investigators still need to determine exactly what preceded the incident.

"That will play a substantial role in our investigation," he said. "We can see the video, and we have an idea of what happens in that portion of the video, but we don't know what led up to the incident. For us to come to any kind of conclusion would really just be a guess."

It's believed the incident unfolded as a result of the woman not adhering to the TransLink bus policy mandating that a mask or face covering be worn for the duration of travel.

In a separate statement to Global News, Hampton urged passengers to not confront travelers ignoring the mask policy, and to instead socially distance themselves from such rulebreakers.

"We don't want people putting themselves at risk," he said.

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Law enforcement officials are urging individuals with knowledge of the altercation to reach out.
Labrador Weighs in on US Election - Video Club

[According to Turkey's state-owned news outlet Anadolu Agency](#), between 2005 and 2017, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) carried out 400 projects across Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank, including building an olive oil production facility in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis and providing fuel aid to relieve chronic shortages. In 2020, after the COVID-19 pandemic hit Gaza, [Turkey opened a Palestine-Turkey Friendship Hospital](#) to treat those infected by the virus.

Sarah Feuer, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Institute for National Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv, [told the Financial Times last month](#) that Gaza fits into Erdogan's "geopolitical and ideological considerations."

"Erdogan sees emerging alliances in the region as a threat, but he's also presenting himself as the leader of the Muslim world and flag bearer for Islamist movements, to counter the Emirati-Saudi-Egyptian camp," Feuer said. "There's a broader struggle still under way over the contours of the regional order, and that is partly what motivates him."

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Convalescent Plasma Therapy of Little Benefit for Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients - Study by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

According to a new medical study, the therapeutic injection of the blood of people who recovered from COVID-19, which contains the antibodies their body used to combat the infection, does little to help hospitalized patients fight off the virus.

Touted for a brief moment as a potentially new treatment for COVID-19, a recent study has cast fresh doubts on the use of convalescent plasma to try and help patients recover from the illness more effectively.

The study was carried out in 39 public and private hospitals across India on 464 adults who were admitted between April 22 and July 14. The results were [published on Thursday in the British Medical Journal](#).

According to the report, the researchers split the patients into two random groups, one of which received two transfusions of convalescent plasma 24 hours apart; the other did not. The transfusions were of blood taken from COVID-19 patients who survived and included the antibodies their bodies produced to fight off the virus.

After seven days, those who received transfusions saw some improvements in terms of symptoms, including signs their bodies were fighting off the virus, but these improvements did not translate into a reduction in deaths or in progression to severe disease by 28 days.

"The ... trial was able to show a small effect on the rate at which patients were able [to] rid themselves of the virus, but this was not enough to improve their recovery from the disease," Simon Clarke, an expert on cellular microbiology at the University of Reading, [told Reuters on Friday](#). "In simple terms, there were no clinical benefits to the patients."

According to [an editorial accompanying the release of the paper](#), Elizabeth B. Pathak, who is the president of the Women's Institute for Independent Social Enquiry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and who was not affiliated with the study, noted the coronavirus

antibodies arrived and did their job, but because plasma infusions also carry a risk of blood clots, the therapy actually made COVID-19 worse at the same time.

"Convalescent plasma did exactly what the investigators hoped it would do, yet there was no net clinical benefit to patients," Pathak wrote. She noted that COVID-19 is "a life threatening thrombotic disorder," meaning it causes blood to thicken and clot, and the primary purpose of giving people plasma infusions is to treat acute bleeding and bleeding disorders - conditions in which it would be good if blood thickened.

In late August, the US Food and Drug Administration approved convalescent plasma treatment for emergency use in hospitalized patients; however, [the agency only said the treatment may be effective](#) in "lessening the severity or shortening the length of COVID-19 illness in some hospitalized patients."

US President Donald Trump nonetheless lauded the new therapy as a miracle treatment, claiming it would reduce mortality rates by as much as 35%.

Dr. Jason Kindrachuk, assistant professor of viral pathogenesis at the University of Manitoba, [told Sputnik at the time the verdict was still out](#) on plasma therapy and more studies needed to be done, but that the drive to find new therapies quickly was understandable.

"I agree with the idea we're in kind of uncharted territory right now and in the need of being able to get vaccines and therapeutics out to folks as quickly as possible, because we do not have time on our side," Kindrachuk told Radio Sputnik's Loud and Clear on August 25. "The unfortunate side is, I think, the presentation of this being a miracle or a potential cure. We have already seen with data that has been presented that there may be some benefit, but we don't know how solid that benefit is."

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Israel Tacitly Approves of US Selling F-35 Stealth Aircraft to UAE
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Jerusalem has given its tacit approval of a proposed deal that would see the United Arab Emirates buy advanced F-35 stealth aircraft from the United States. If completed, Abu Dhabi would become only the second country in the Middle East to operate the F-35, apart from Israel. In a Friday joint statement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz [said Israel would not oppose a US sale of](#) "certain weapon systems" to the UAE, which signed a peace agreement with Israel last month and opened normal diplomatic relations. "The Prime Minister and the Defense Minister both agree that since the US is upgrading Israel's military capability and is maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge, Israel will not oppose the sale of these systems to the UAE," the Israeli leaders said.

According to the release, Gantz reached "understandings" with US military leaders [during his visit to the US earlier this week](#) aimed at ensuring Israel maintains that edge.

At present, Israel is the only country in the Middle East to operate the F-35 Lightning II, a fifth-generation stealth aircraft built by Lockheed Martin. Turkey would have become the

second, but Washington removed Ankara from the F-35 program in response to Turkey's purchase of S-400 air defense systems from Russia.

The aircraft not only sports a host of advanced radar and sensor systems, but is also designed to have a minimal radar signature, making it hard to spot, track and target with radar and missiles.

In August, [the Israeli Air Force \(IAF\) announced its second squadron](#) of F-35I "Adir" fighters, a specially modified version of the standard F-35A jet used by the US Air Force, was combat-ready. [According to the Jerusalem Post](#), the IAF will have 27 F-35Is by November out of a total of 50 it expects to eventually receive.

While the UAE, a Saudi and US ally, might one day fly the F-35, [Israel has already expressed firm opposition to the jet's acquisition](#) by another Persian Gulf power with which it also recently signed a peace deal: Qatar, which is closer to Iran as well as the Palestinian group Hamas, both of which are Israeli adversaries.

"Our security and military superiority in the region are the most significant things for us. Our region has still not turned into Switzerland," Israeli Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen told Israel's Army Radio on October 11.

On Friday, [Sudan joined the UAE and Qatar in signing a peace deal](#) with Israel, becoming the fifth Arab nation to do so. Egypt and Jordan, the first two to do so, signed peace deals decades ago.

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Video: First Nest of Invasive Asian Giant Hornets Finally Located in Washington State
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

After a protracted search, officials in the US state of Washington have located the first American nest of the Asian giant hornet, an invasive species whose potentially deadly sting and infamous practice of slaughtering honeybee hives has earned it the moniker "murder hornet."

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced on Friday that a week's worth of searching had finally yielded what entomologists and locals alike had long feared: the Asian giant hornet is building nests in the United States. The officials found one in a tree hollow in Blaine, a town on the US-Canada border.

Officials said a treeborne nest is unusual, since the hornets typically nest in the ground, but it's not unknown.

"The successful detection of a nest comes after a WSDA trapper collected two live Asian giant hornets on Oct. 21, caught in a new type of trap the agency had placed in the area," [the WSDA news release states](#). "Two more hornets, also living, were found in another trap the morning of Oct. 22 when WSDA staff arrived in the area to tag the previously trapped hornets with radio trackers and follow one back to its nest."

The WSDA notes the entomologists attached radio tracking devices to three hornets, leading them to the nest on Thursday evening. Officials plan to return on Saturday to eradicate the nest, after the weather improves.

Blaine was also where the [first sighting of an Asian giant hornet in the US](#) was made in December 2019. Since then, roughly 20 insects have been caught, all of them in Whatcom County, where Blaine is located.

The 2-inch-long insect is the largest of any kind of wasp or hornet and is native to East Asia. Aside from their extremely powerful stings and aggressive demeanor, the so-called "murder hornets" can decimate honeybee hives, using their powerful mandibles to bite the tiny bees in half before feeding them to their larvae. A small group of hornets can [massacre an entire honeybee hive in a few hours](#).

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'Critical Phase': US Breaks Record for Single-Day Increase in COVID-19 Cases

The United States set a new record for daily COVID-19 cases on Thursday, with more than 77,000 new cases recorded, according to the latest tally by NBC News.

The second-highest number of recorded cases in the US occurred on July 29, when nearly 76,000 new daily infections were reported. The latest record-breaking daily number comes as the total numbers of COVID-19 cases and related deaths in the US have surpassed 8.7 million and 228,000, respectively, [according to the latest data by Worldometer](#).

The new daily record also comes after US President Donald Trump on Thursday, during his final debate with former Vice President Joe Biden, claimed that the pandemic "will soon be gone."

"We've been hearing essentially the same words from the president since February, that it was going to go away, that it's going to disappear, whether that's in February, March, April, May, and that's what he's saying now," Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, told MSNBC on Friday, [NBC News reported](#). "That's not what the data says, unfortunately. I wish he was right."

A [recent analysis by Reuters](#) also found that hospitals across the US have seen a 36% jump in COVID-19 patients over the last four weeks, with Midwest hospitals setting new daily records. Since October, 16 states have reported their highest daily numbers of hospitalized patients since the pandemic first broke out, including Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, according to Reuters.

On Wednesday, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers urged residents to stay home after a field hospital in the Milwaukee suburbs admitted its first COVID-19 patient after it opened last week. "Folks, please stay home," Evers said, Reuters reported. "Help us protect our communities from this highly contagious virus and avoid further strain on our hospitals."

New Mexico has also experienced a spike in cases, [with the state having recorded more than 39,000 cases](#) overall as of Friday. In addition, around 80% of the state's general hospital beds are currently occupied.

"It's the most dire situation our state has faced ever and so far in this entire pandemic," said Nora Meyers Sackett, a spokesperson for New Mexico Governor Lujan Grisham, according to the [Santa Fe New Mexican](#).

"We are on a precipice of facing even more growth of the virus if every New Mexican doesn't hunker down and do what needs to be done to mitigate the spread," she added. In addition to the rising hospitalizations, the seven-day average of new US COVID-19 cases has increased by 45% in the last four weeks, the Reuters analysis revealed. The increase in hospitalizations is alarming, as it may be an indication that hospitals will soon struggle to respond to the surges. "By the time we see hospitalizations rise, it means we're really struggling," Saskia Popescu, an epidemiologist at George Mason University, [recently told AP](#). Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also warned on Wednesday that "the pandemic is not over." "Here in the United States, we're approaching a critical phase," he said, [CNBC reported](#). Some people have argued that the increase in COVID-19 testing may explain the steep surge in cases. Although data compiled by the [COVID Tracking Project](#) shows that the US conducted more than 1.1 million tests Thursday, the number of cases has increased at a faster rate than testing. "If steps are not taken to reduce transmission at the community level, it'll come to no surprise that health care systems start to feel a pinch and start to head towards capacity and beyond capacity," Dr. Isaac Bogoch, an infectious disease specialist and professor at the University of Toronto, recently told CNBC.

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Photos: US Senate Majority Leader Denies Claims That His Discolored Hand Indicates Health Issues

Concerns have been raised in recent days about the apparent discoloration and bruising on the right hand of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) after photos of him went viral on Wednesday.

In one such image, McConnell is bending down to pick up a dropped face mask. His right hand appears to be much darker than the rest of his body, and his thumb is bandaged. A bandage can also be seen on his left hand, which appears to bear some slight discoloration.

When asked on Thursday by Politico reporter John Bresnahan if he was having any health troubles, McConnell declined to provide any clarifications.

"Do you have some kind of health issue?" Bresnahan asked, [BuzzFeed News reported](#).

"Everyone's been talking about your hands."

"I've been worried about your health, Bres. How are you feeling?" McConnell retorted, using the reporter's nickname.

"But I'm serious, is there anything going on we should know about?" Bresnahan asked once again.

"Of course not," replied McConnell.

McConnell has also refused to answer reporters' questions on if he's being treated by a doctor.

McConnell's health may be of significance in Kentucky, where early voting began on October 13 and McConnell is running for reelection against Democratic challenger Amy McGrath, a retired US Marine Corps fighter pilot.

"It's understandable that Senator McConnell might not want to discuss questions about his health so close to an election," Marisa McNee, a spokesperson for Kentucky Democratic Party, told BuzzFeed.

"But as Senate Majority Leader, he is a public figure which requires more disclosure and transparency than just the average private person," McNee added.

McConnell did not appear to have any bruising on his hands during a debate in Lexington, Kentucky, on October 12, [the Courier-Journal reported](#).

This is not the first time the senator has refused to directly answer questions about his personal health.

Earlier this month, after US President Donald Trump and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) confirmed they had tested positive for COVID-19, McConnell refused to reveal when he had last been tested for the novel coronavirus.

"Have I ever been tested? Yes," he told reporters, the Courier-Journal reported. "But I'm not going to answer questions about when."

According to an article by [Snopes](#), which confirmed that the photos of McConnell's hands circulating on the internet are real, there are many theories as to the cause of the discoloration, from claims he has contracted to COVID-19, to the possibility that he has a vascular disease, is undergoing dialysis or is taking blood thinners, which can lead to easy bruising.

No further evidence beyond the photos has been provided to support any of those theories.

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'Out of Government Reach': Nigerians Turn to Bitcoin to Fund Anti-Police Brutality Protests

As protests sweep across Nigeria in response to police brutality, some protesters have turned to Bitcoin to provide medical care, legal aid and funeral funds to demonstrators, Dr. Linwood Tauheed, associate professor of economics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, told Political Misfits on Friday.

On October 7, protesters began demanding that a notorious police unit, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), be shut down. The Nigerian Police Force on October 11 announced that SARS had been dissolved in response to the protests, [the Washington Post reported](#).

The [Feminist Coalition](#) was also founded in July in Nigeria to "champion equality for women in Nigerian society with core focuses of education, financial freedom, and representation in public office." In the last month, the group has focused on providing funds to those participating in the demonstrations against police brutality.

Nigerian authorities caught wind of the fundraisers and shut down the payment platforms used to process donations, prompting the group to use bitcoins as an alternative payment option, Tauheed, president of the National Economic Association, [explained to hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuber](#).

"The attempt to stifle political opposition by shutting down their finances, in this case when it's held in [a] bank account - it's easy to do, because banks are better regulated by government. That's not limited to Nigeria. We've seen organizations that have been engaged in protest in the US having their PayPal accounts shut down and having other types of accounts that would be used to raise funds for those who are protesting closed," Tauheed told Sputnik.

"With cryptocurrency, it's not foolproof. The government will not be able to interact with or shut down a cryptocurrency account. It's much more difficult for the government to do that than it is for the government to shut down a bank, and therefore there is less risk in holding a cryptocurrency account if you are involved in activities that the government doesn't like," Tauheed added.

According to a report by [CoinDesk](#), the Feminist Coalition has used the Sendcash platform to convert bitcoin payments into naira, the Nigerian currency, before depositing that money into demonstrators' bank accounts.

"There's also the situation in which a cryptocurrency is used to act as a less risky way of raising money or crowdfunding ... [and can be] used to help protesters to pay for funerals for those who have been killed and other kinds of things ... But there's also another aspect of cryptocurrency in Nigeria - that persons who are being targeted by SARS, the Special Anti-Robbery Unit, were having their bank accounts confiscated. The police would pick them up thinking they had money in their bank accounts," Tauheed explained.

"When that money is in bitcoin or some other kind of cryptocurrency, it's not impossible, but it's more difficult for the government to confiscate those funds, so we see that individuals, not just organizations, are using cryptocurrency to avoid the confiscation of their funds by the government. So cryptocurrency is playing a role of being a place where people can put their money that is out of government reach," Tauheed concluded.

SARS was set up in Nigeria decades ago in response to increased levels of crime and kidnappings. In June, Amnesty International revealed that there were at least 82 cases of torture, ill treatment and extrajudicial execution by SARS between January 2017 and May 2020 alone.

"The complete failure of Nigerian authorities to bring an end to the gross human rights violations perpetuated by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad or to bring any SARS officer to justice is shocking and unacceptable. Nigerians are outraged by the systemic human rights violations perpetrated by the SARS with impunity," Osai Ojigbo, director of Amnesty International Nigeria, said in a [statement accompanying the report](#).

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Hong Kong Reports Dramatic Spike in Deadly Superbug Cases Amid COVID-19 Pandemic
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Health officials in Hong Kong are seeing a startling uptick in cases of the superbug *Candida auris*, a fungal infection that is highly resistant to current antifungal drugs, following the discovery and global spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

Dr. Raymond Lai, the chief infection control officer of Hong Kong's Hospital Authority, revealed Friday that officials are attempting to find an explanation for the worrying outbreak of some 136 reported cases of *Candida auris* within a 10-month span.

Comparatively, 20 cases of the deadly fungal infection were logged for all of 2019.

"We hope to control the fungus within the hospitals and elderly homes, so it won't be spread to the community," Lai said during an October 23 news conference, [as reported by the South China Morning Post](#).

Depending on the infection's location and an individual's health, patients with the superbug are said to have between a [30% and 60% chance of death](#), according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Furthermore, scientists have found that, in some infectees, yeast resistant to commonly used antifungal drugs can enter the bloodstream, causing [life-threatening and invasive infections](#) throughout the body.

Many identified *Candida auris* cases originated in senior homes and hospitals, including Yan Chai Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and North Lantau Hospital. Infections have been reported in patients with ages ranging from 21 to 101, but almost 80% of all cases were found in people aged over 60 years old.

Lai believes the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the spread of the fungal infection due to the lack of available isolation facilities in Hong Kong's public hospitals.

Experts have identified that, like the novel coronavirus, *Candida auris* can spread via contact with a contaminated surface, or through person-to-person contact.

"Some hospitals don't have isolation rooms in their general wards, so they can only put *Candida auris* patients at the corner of these wards as a precautionary measure, which can increase chances of cross infection," Lai explained.

"Currently the patients need to share medical equipment, but we aim to have separate equipment for every single patient and prevent cross infection between them," he stated.

The health expert did not reveal how many fatalities, if any, have been associated with the superbug this year.

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Court Docs Reveal US Republican State Senate Candidate Booted From School Over KKK Halloween Regalia
by [Evan Craighead](#)

A Republican running for the Arkansas Senate was dismissed from the Mississippi high school he attended nearly two decades ago after allegedly dressing up as a member of the Ku Klux Klan during a school-sponsored Halloween event.

The campaign of Charles Beckham, a 37-year-old Republican candidate running for District 12's Arkansas Senate seat, has reignited the alleged trauma of former classmates who claim the political hopeful donned full KKK regalia in 2000 while attending the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science.

Five classmates who [spoke with the Arkansas Times](#) detailed that Beckham and two friends strolled through the women's dorm - which was open for the school's Halloween event - in what appeared to be authentic KKK garments, including the pointed mask and hat and robe with a circular insignia.

Victoria Brown, a Black classmate, recalled that the three students were not being playful, but marching with a "commanding presence" that made her think: "Did I see what I just saw? Gee, they just have these [outfits] at home? Do they do this on the weekend?"

Beckham has denied the allegations and [argued to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#) that there is no truth to the claims.

"First of all, I unequivocally denounce the KKK and any like minded hate group," he expressed in an email to the outlet. "It is sad that the Democrats will do anything and say anything to try to win. The accusations that have been made about me are not only baseless and false, but disgusting."

However, a January 2001 court order produced by the Mississippi State Board of Education detailed that Beckam, also known as "Bubba," did acknowledge the KKK regalia incident occurred.

"Bubba further contends that there was no physical or emotional harm caused by his actions," revealed the order, which explained the arguments made in a notice of appeal regarding Beckham's expulsion filed by his family. "There were several students testifying on behalf of Bubba that stated the costume worn by Bubba was in poor taste or immature, but they felt it was nothing more than a costume."

"The costumes consisted of white bed sheets that were sewn into the form of robes with a patch on the chest area and pillowcases that were cut into hoods," the order stated, as reported by the Democrat-Gazette. "The costumes were worn to school-sponsored Halloween activities that consisted of 'trick or treating' in the girls' dormitory."

The suit was dismissed in November 2001, and the school's decision to reprimand Beckham with a suspension, followed by a dismissal, was upheld by the Mississippi Board of Education.

"They weren't sheets, they looked to me to be real robes," said Bronwen Haskel, a white classmate of Beckham's who recounted the incident to the outlet. "I remember seeing a Black classmate and the look of pain on his face."

Beckham is in a tight race with the Democratic incumbent, state Sen. Bruce Maloch of Magnolia, Arkansas, according to the Democrat-Gazette.

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US Coast Guard May Post Patrol Cutters in Western Pacific to Deter Chinese Boats - O'Brien

United States national security adviser Robert O'Brien says the US Coast Guard (USCG) is evaluating the possible basing of Sentinel-class cutters in American Samoa as a response to alleged illegal activity and harassment by China.

The USCG expressed intent to evaluate the stationing of Enhanced Fast Response Cutters in the western Pacific for maritime security missions, such as recent illegal fishing and harassment by Chinese vessels, O'Brien detailed in a Friday statement obtained by Reuters.

If the survey, slated for fiscal year 2021, is "favorable," the US "could further expand its presence" in the region, he said, [as reported by](#) CNN National Security Reporter Ryan Browne. "China's illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and harassment of vessels operating in the exclusive economic zones of other countries in the Indo-Pacific, threatens our sovereignty, as well as the sovereignty of our Pacific neighbors and endangers regional stability," O'Brien alleged.

"Efforts of the United States Government, including the United States Coast Guard (USCG) are critical to countering these destabilizing and malign actions."

This public announcement comes a day after the Trump administration official spoke with American Samoa Governor Lolo Matalasi Moliga.

The USCG [released a 40-page report](#) on "Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing" last month, announcing the service would be increasing its focus on "at-sea enforcement of the [US] living marine resource laws."

"China must exercise more responsible flag state control over its vessels, including its [Distant Water Fishing (DWF) vessels], and demonstrate that it is taking the necessary steps to ensure compliance with international norms and governance structures," the report argued, stressing "sovereign nations must be allowed to benefit from their own economic resources."

[According to the USCG](#), these DWF vessels, which carry out fishing operations on an industrial scale, are jeopardizing global food security and producing "destabilizing effects on vulnerable coastal States."

Last year, the Solomon Islands, located in the Pacific near American Samoa, moved to switch its recognition of Taiwan over to China and its "one country, two systems" principle. The change left Taiwan, which has agreed to various military contracts with US defense contractors via Washington, with the support of four Western Pacific island nations. Fourteen nations in total have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

Vanuatu, a collection of 80 islands in the Pacific, was forced to go on the defensive in 2018 after an anonymously sourced Australian news report suggested the archipelago nation was discussing the construction of a possible People's Liberation Army military base.

Then-Foreign Minister Ralph Regenvanu [denounced the report](#), arguing that "we are a non-aligned country. We are not interested in militarization; we are just not interested in any sort of military base in our country."

A spokesperson for the Chinese Defense Ministry dismissed the allegations as "fake news."

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Video: US Navy Aircraft Crashes into Alabama House, Two Pilots Killed

by [Evan Craighead](#)

A US Navy aircraft crash southeast of Mobile, Alabama, has resulted in the deaths of at least two people, according to statements provided by local authorities.

"No civilians were injured on the ground," the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office said of the Magnolia Springs crash on Twitter Friday evening. Two individuals, presumably US Navy pilots, [were confirmed dead](#) following the crash.

Baldwin County's Magnolia Springs is approximately 35 miles from Florida's Naval Air Station Pensacola and less than 48 miles from ST Engineering, the location of US President Donald Trump's [Friday night campaign rally](#).

Video footage and images from the scene have emerged on social media.

Be advised that the footage below contains language that may offend some audiences.

Members of the Foley Fire Department arrived on the scene around 4:23 p.m. local time to find a downed aircraft and one home ablaze. Several vehicles are reported to have been damaged in the Friday incident.

The fire was fully extinguished by responding emergency personnel.

The impacted area was struck by Hurricane Sally a few weeks prior.